

La Poche Du Temps CafÃ©

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Category: BioShock

Genre: Mystery, Tragedy

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-10 01:15:17

Updated: 2016-04-10 01:15:17

Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:54:00

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,275

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Paris. Elizabeth is sitting quietly at her table, enjoying the scenery. But when a mysterious boy meets her, her coffee may turn out to be a little stronger than expected.

La Poche Du Temps CafÃ©

Paris. La Poche du Temps CafÃ©.

Sipping mild coffee on the white sheeted cafÃ© table, looking at the horizon of the sun reaching over the Eiffel Tower in a pinkly sky, and closing her eyes to the sound of chirping blue birds in the air overhead; Elizabeth leaned back, and hummed playfully to her surroundings. She didn't really know, and almost dreaded to think, how long she had been here in Paris. It seemed like she only arrived yesterday, but she had grown to be accustomed with her new home in almost no time; more so that she felt like she'd been here her whole life. Everyone seemed to know her, either through some forced jollity or the fact that with her blue and white dress turned a few heads.

It was solitary, confined, and almost completely free. She could go, and sometimes even a little further, anywhere in the city. The buildings weren't high so that they could clog up the sky so long ago, nor were the trees in the parks she often had picnics by herself. Birds seemed to follow her wherever she went, hopping playfully on her checkered red blanket and picking out breadcrumbs on the plates that she bought in the market nearby. It seemed idyllic. Utopic.

The only real hindrance of it all, for all its joyful and beautiful landscaping conceived by her, she knew that it wasn't real. But despite all of that; the fact that the world she left behind to delve into her dream-like retreat wasn't a better alternative to something that wasn't real. And as she finally put the cup in the saucer, opening her eyes to greet the world she came to love and long for at the same time; she soon realised that it maybe could change.

"May I join you?"

The voice came from her left. Leaning on a small table, with a gramophone playing delightful music and a bottle of expensive looking wine; was an adolescent boy. Tall, oddly yet smartly dressed in a dirty pinstripe blue suit with dark blue trousers, thin; this boy had almost no right to be here. His face was thin too, but his eyes were too big for his face. He was surprisingly clean, despite his rugged look, and the pony tail in the back of his mud brown hair, he looked as if he was from some other world. He also didn't speak French, which surprised her even more than his appearance.

"I said may I join you?" the boy asked again, a little bit irritated.

"Umâ€¦ alright. Take a seat." Elizabeth replied, not sure whether if it was a good idea to offer a seat to stranger, judging from her various experiences in a city in the sky. But before she could take back what she blurted out, the boy had already sat down at her table.

Putting his hands on the table, brushing away some breadcrumbs from a baguette, and resting them cross fingered. He smiled broadly, cheek to cheek, as if he knew something that she didn't.

"It's funny, really. The twenty-two times I did this you told me to go away. I guess twenty-three times is a charm." The boy said. His voice. It seemed almost too familiar to her, almost likeâ€¦ She couldn't put it to words, maybe it was like that French saying.

"Twenty-two times? What are you talking about?" she replied, perplexed at his comment.

"Alright, I tell a lie, twenty-one. But anyway, enough about my adventures, let's talk about yours, Elizabeth."

It shouldn't have shocked her. It wouldn't have, nor couldn't. Everyone in her Paris seemed to know her, even the birds. Painters, children, bookshop owners, even street clowns seemed to know Elizabeth Comstock, the girl from America. But this boy, with his British accent, his dirtied clothes and that smile of his; him knowing her name shocked her.

"How do youâ€¦?" she stuttered out, barely catching breath in the end of the question.

"Know your name? Complicated, that's what I said to you those couple of times. One of them you even slapped me in the-"

She didn't mean to. But she did it anyway. She readied herself to leave, but found her left arm tugged on by a firm hand.

"Stay. We need to talk. Now."

It was quite surprising that she sat back down. She didn't want to, but with him there, sitting opposite her, not any harm to her, she somehow thought that maybe she knew him. She could see behind all those doors.

Sitting down, straightening her chair, and sipping her coffee once again, she listened to the boy, in as much attention that she could muster for herself.

"Now, Elizabeth. May I call you Elizabeth?"

Nod.

"My name is Eli. I come from a place along long, long way away. I've come hereâ€¦ wherever here isâ€¦ to invite you to join me." He smiled broadly, as if he knew that she would say no. "I realise that you won't want to, especially since your powers could easily kill me now and you could happily enjoy your espresso in peace, butâ€¦ you won't."

"Why not?" she enquired, clear smugness and hints of surprise that he knew of her powers.

"Becauseâ€¦" He raised his arm, and clicked his fingers.

A sphere of light burst from his resting thumb, and spread across the table, and eventually the street at remarkable speed. Inside the sphere, a bright array of colours; green, orange, blue, red, yellow, swelling the landscape before her and turning it into a new one. She'd seen this before. The table and chairs were still here, same layout; even the wine and the coffee, but the La Poche de Temps CafÃ© had vanished behind her. She was somewhere else, a darkened alleyway, but it was familiar somehow.

The alley was soaking wet with rain. Bits of litter and a garbage can had been discarded on the cobbled ground. The buildings forming the alleyway sprung up in the air, reaching the sky like thirsty men reaching for rain. She saw Eli, sitting comfortably on his chair, rubbing bits of rain on his blue pinstripe trousers. He didn't react surprisingly amid the new environment, hardly even remotely, simply smiling back to Elizabeth as she further studied this new place she found herself in.

"Where are we?" she inquired, hardly noticing the event that was happening behind her.

"We are where we have no right to be. And over thereâ€¦" pointing to behind her, far down the alleyway.

She turned to see what he was showing her. Two men, hunched over in the rain and gazing upon a white hole in the side of the brick wall, were a few yards behind her. One, near-covered in brown clothes (save for his beige jacket and green tie); was nearest the white hole, talking through the pattering rain to an unseen figure. The other, the most hunched; darkly yet exquisitely dressed, and thickly bearded; was clutching a baby in a blue cloth in his thick arms. She knew what was happening.

Turning back, she clenched her jaw and fists, wanting to throw the table in his face. Acknowledging her response, Eli simply eat a small slice of baguette from the table, half sheltering it from the rain. He stared blankly at her while he chewed ever more slowly, then looking on at the event that unfolded behind her.

A man, roughly dressed and seemingly roguish from his appearance; lunged at the bearded man, trying to grab the baby. The white hole expanded, large enough to crouch under, and the two men attempted to get through. The rough man, still trying to grab the baby; yanked hard, nearly pulling the baby out of the bearded man's grasp. The two men were through, but the bearded man's torso were still caught in the white hole's inside.

"You son of a bitch!" the rough man yelled, pushing hard with a foot on the bricked wall.

The rain and sweat underneath his grip of the baby, the rough man was having trouble keeping hold of the baby, frantically trying to pull harder and grip even harder. But, inevitably, the grip loosened; and the rough man fell back slightly, but caught his balance.

"Shut down the machine!" a voice from the other side of the white hole. "Do it!"

The white hole was closing, but the rough man lunged his arms in, and yanked once again. The white hole was still closing. Something from the other side of the hole was pulling back, and the rough man still was pulling.

"I said, shut it down! Now! I don't care if his arms get caught, do it now!" the voice from the other side shouted again.

Elizabeth, having enough, leapt up from her chair and ran towards the rough man, and tugged the baby through the white hole. The rough man didn't acknowledge her, barely even registering her existence, and continued to pull. Eli still sat in his chair, eating away at the slice of baguette. He wasn't enjoying it, it was a heart-breaking scene, but he smiled anyway.

"No! Keep it open! Keep it open!" the voice yelled.

"The power is failing! We're not going to be able to!" another voice replied. "Let's just try another one! There are plenty out there, Comstock!"

Elizabeth and the rough man still tugged, trying to get the baby through the still shrinking white hole. One of its legs had gotten through, just below the knee. Elizabeth turned to Eli, shrieking at the top of her lungs.

"Help us!"

Eli nodded a no. She wasn't confused, but rather disappointed. Turning to the white hole, seeing three faces she wouldn't have hoped to see again, she started to realise something. She had known this event a little too well. The event that set the dystopian course in her life. She'd been the baby, in a different world, far away from this one. And this world, this alleyway, this brick wall, this white hole, this baby caught in-between; she realised something. It wasn't her.

"Give him back! The deal is off!"

Him. Him, the baby. And then she saw it. She turned to Eli once again, who crooked a finger for her to come over. Knowing that there

would be no point to tug; she let go, and strutted over to the table. She ignored the angry howls of the rough man, and the event that transpired before her.

"Can we go back?"

He nodded. She sat back down. And the click of his fingers, and the familiar white sphere bubbling into the alleyway, the rough man and white hole. A moment later, after her vision was filled with eternal white, she found herself (and regrettably Eli) back in the La Poche du Temps café. Paris.

"Happy?" he asked her.

"I don't know. Are you?"

He smiled in a corner of his mouth. Wiping his mouth with a napkin, and standing up a little too quickly; he bowed partially to her. After a split second of turning to leave, he turned back to face her.

"I have one parting question, Elizabeth."

"What, Eli."

"Your powers and how you got them. Your little finger, that thimble for replacement. Did you really think that that you were the only one?"

He walked away, oddly with a slight limp, and turned to give Elizabeth a wave of either dismissal or farewell. She looked down, where his limp had originated from, and saw where his trousers had attempted to cover, a metal rod connected his leg with his foot, or rather, a prosthetic foot. Winking, he clicked his fingers, the sphere appearing once again. Surrounding him, then pausing for a moment; the sphere shrunk back in on itself, leaving an empty part of the street, no Eli any more.

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End
file.